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ABSTRACT

The subject of career education is a vast and complex one. For example, it often emphasizes alternative educational programs for high school and junior high students that may involve substituting work for academic experience in industrial settings outside the schools. Or it may encompass recurrent or lifelong education programs for adults that provide additional education which may or may not be work related. The youth oriented ideas can mean less education while the concepts aimed at adults suggest more. No one would deny that education and work are related. The real issue is what form any advocacy movement takes and whose interests it serves. The rationale behind much of the federally supported career education effort is weak, and many of the programs seem to be more in the interests of big business than in the interests of our nation's youth. Career education cannot solve the youth unemployment problem, but certainly there are youth problems that well-directed career education programs could help with. The American Federation of Teachers advocates dissemination of more information on job availability, occupational projections, and job access. It supports job training programs which build upon a basic education by combining further academic experiences with on-the-job experiences, but it strongly opposes any occupational education program that would diminish general liberal education or that would endanger present child labor, minimum wage, early school leaving, and health and safety laws. It also strongly opposes programs that involve turning over some of the responsibility for public education to the private sector. (BL)

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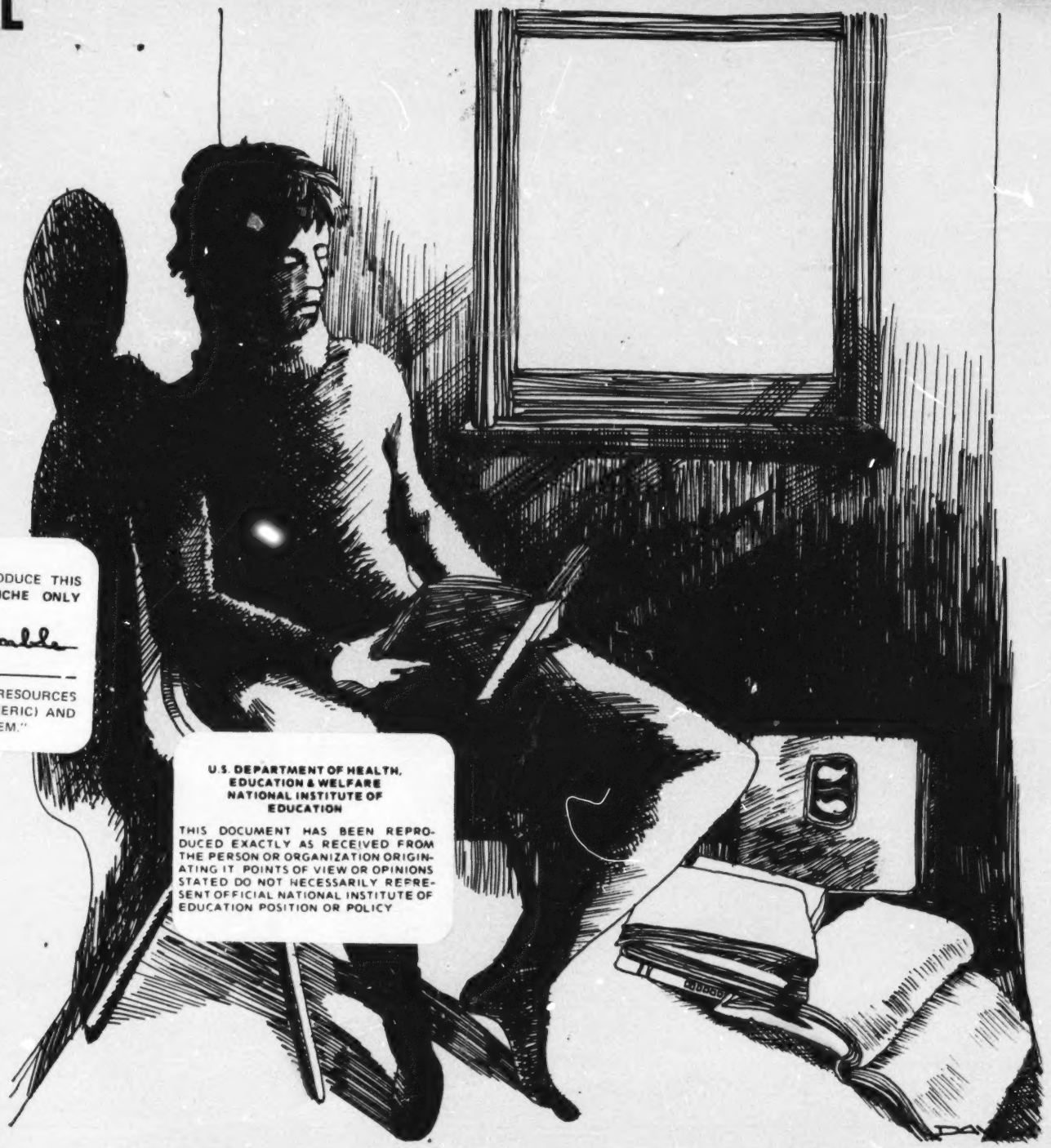
OUR NATIONAL EDUCATION AND WORK POLICY: PITFALLS AND POSSIBILITIES



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A POSITION PAPER
OF THE AFT TASK FORCE
ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

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"Labor has warned against permitting vaguely thought through career education plans to convert the schools into simply job training institutions. Relating education to the world of work is important, but it is equally important that education be related to preparing students for the demands of citizenship, for their future roles as members of their families, and for the fullest development of their human potential. Although most of the official spokesmen for career education pay lip service to this principal, their actions do not always follows their rhetoric."

—From the AFL-CIO Executive Council Report to the Eleventh Convention, October 2, 1975

The idea that there is a need to more closely relate schooling and job preparation has received a lot of attention from the recent Nixon-Ford Administration. "Education and Work," as the concept is termed, has an all-emcompassing appeal which includes a broad range of programs—everything from "career education" to "lifelong," "recurrent," "continuing" and even "competency-based" education. But, promotion of these concepts is really motivated by quite different assumptions about the value of education—some positive, other negative. Some are committed to its intrinsic worth while others seem designed to mask programs that are not educational at all with the rhetoric of learning.

The subject is a vast one, and many of the programs it now incorporates seem to be moving in opposite directions. "Career education," for example, often emphasizes alternative educational programs for high school and junior high school students that may involve *substituting* work for academic experience in industrial settings outside the schools. Such programs aimed at "hands on," "real life" experience for youth may have the net effect of diminish-

ing the academic and intellectual experience of school in the name of occupational "relevance." And, to support this theme, career educators want younger children to be exposed to curriculum that will provide for "career awareness." Unlike vocational education, which involves specific job training for students who choose it, career education is supposed to be for everyone.

Recurrent or lifelong education programs, on the other hand, are directed primarily at adults, and provide *additional* education which may or may not be work related. The youth oriented ideas can mean *less* education while the concepts aimed at adults suggest *more*. In the first instance work is viewed as a substitute for education while in the last more education is seen as a supplement to the basic high school education which most adults already have. Its purpose may or may not have anything to do with work. So far career education has managed to get by cheaply primarily on monies originally slotted for vocational education. Lifelong education, recurrent education and continuing education, on the other hand, have received little more than lip service—a fact that undoubtedly relates to their inevitable expense.

No one would deny that education and work are related. The real issue is what form any advocacy movement to increase that relationship takes. Whose interests does it serve—business, a Republican administration, educators, or the students themselves? Educational policy that emerges from the "education and work" theme could add significantly to educational enrichment of our nation's youth, or it could diminish their work possibilities and narrow their horizons. The thrust of one administration—whether at the federal or state level--need not be the same as its predecessor. Hopefully the analysis that follows will lead to support for positive programs and opposition to those that are dangerous.

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I. The History

Education and work as a policy theme really begins with career education. The career education idea came originally from Sidney Marland, U.S. Commissioner of Education under Richard Nixon during 1970-72 and Assistant Secretary of Education during 1972-73. A proponent of closer linkages between business and the schools, Marland came to his post with a background in the advocacy of business education projects like performance contracting. Performance contracting involved business in "contracts" in which they would provide educational resources in return for agreed upon amounts of student achievement. To Marland "career education" represented still another means of turning educational functions over to private industry. In his book *Career Education*, Marland devotes twenty-two pages to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's program for career education which included the following ideas: (1) that professional teachers exchange places with workers periodically; (2) that all high school students have work experience at reduced wages or under terms that allow them to be paid in academic credit; (3) that special job slots be allocated for youth so that they don't have to compete with adults, (the Chamber of Commerce would act as a recruiting center for these jobs); (4) that workers play a counseling role in giving career advice; and (5) that "every student leaving school be equipped with a marketable skill."

Marland's emphasis on the Chamber of Commerce ideas and their clear money-saving implications make it quite understandable why business was so enamored of his career education proposal. It also helps to explain why his book barely mentions organized labor's critical reaction to the concept. In speaking of the role of industry, Marland says:

> . . . career education, wholly perceived, calls for a major change in the place industry occupies in education. There is a readiness on the part of industry for this larger responsibility. Strong commitments extended in recent years by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and many individual corporations make clear the willingness of industry to take on new responsibilities in the development of the young.

Essentially, Marland defines career education as a combined academic and vocational thrust that begins in the earliest grades. The idea is to provide students with increased career awareness, and give them the skills they will need to get jobs as soon as they leave high school. The assumption is made that career education will help to reduce unemployment since "salable skills" are its end result. Supposedly this will also help to solve the problem of worker dissatisfaction which, allegedly results from over-education, overqualification and subsequent worker alienation.

Marland's method for promoting this set of ideas initially involved making a deal with the Chief State School Officers. He agreed to put $9 million of the Commissioner's discretionary funds into career educa-

tion if the Chiefs would put $9 million of Vocational Education Act funds, which they got on a discretionary basis, into the same enterprise. In this way Marland managed to begin selling career education by using funds intended for vocational education. Apparently, it was enough money to promote a concept.

The next source of support for the Marland version of career education was *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*, a report of the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee headed by the well-known researcher, James Coleman. The report, also known as Coleman II, was an answer to the career education advocate's dreams. It lent research legitimacy to the idea that the role of the schools had to be transformed in the direction of supplying work experience.

Coleman II suggested that our nation's young people are an isolated generation and that part of their alienation from other age groups comes from the fact that society prolongs their state of dependency through the educational system. Among the solutions which Coleman II proposed were: (1) changes in school structure allowing for greater student choice including choice of non-academic activities in non-school settings; (2) alternation of school and work experiences at the high school level; (3) shifting educational responsibilities to work environments, including the use of non-teachers in instructional roles; (4) the expansion of the role of youth communities and youth organizations; (5) removal of restrictions that prevent youth from working, including revision of child labor standards, lowering the school-leaving age and creation of a

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dual minimum wage that would allow lower payments for youth workers; (6) voucher payments to youth to allow them to pick their own form of education; (7) increased public service opportunities for youth along the lines of VISTA, the Peace Corps, Job Corps, and the Youth Conservation Corps; (8) more research on the problems of youth as well as on the effects of the above proposals.

Coleman II actually amounted to a compilation of assumptions and conclusions about the youth predicament. As a collection of essays by individual panel members, often supported by very little data, Coleman II seemed more an occasion for recommendations already arrived at than it did a comprehensive report. Its conclusions became grist for the education and work mill—particularly for those programs that the administration was advocating in the form of career education.

Coleman II was not the only report to serve this purpose. It was soon followed by *The Reform of Secondary Education, A Report of the National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education,* a group established and funded by the Charles E. Kettering Foundation. While the Commission's recommendations pretty much mirrored those found in Coleman II, it added the idea that instruction should be "performance based," meaning that teachers should establish highly specific instructional goals geared to equally specific student performance skills. It also suggested that "career education advisory councils" including representatives of labor, business, the community, students and former students be established to assist in planning and implementing career education programs in comprehensive high schools. B. Frank Brown, chairman of the Commission, has been one of the more outspoken advocates of a lowered minimum school-leaving age and has proposed that states reduce their requirements to age 14.

Marland's idea was off and running. A few reports and some money intended for vocational education had made career education a popular educational concept. Next came Gerald Ford's address at Ohio State University in August of 1974 shortly after he was sworn in as President. Coming as it did, right after Ford took office, the Ohio speech with its theme of education and work sent the federal bureaucracy into a frenzy of activity. By October 1974, the daily education newsletters were reporting on major federal policy initiatives that would link education and work. Things did not get settled so quickly. Nothing much concrete came of this in the way of money but the public relations continues.

The latest activities sponsored by this administration include an invitational meeting sponsored by the Department of Commerce in October of 1976 and a massive conference on career education held in November and put together by the Office of Career Education. The conference claimed attendance by more than 5,000 participants. The Chamber of Commerce meeting featured Secretary of Commerce Elliot Richardson presenting an "agenda for action" in career education to a largely business audience.

Among the proposals which Richardson put forward was the idea that corporations should "take the initiative" in career education and "be sure career education is school policy." He also suggested, "this is not an add-on program, but a reform movement that not only improves basic academic skills but also their application to careers and lifestyle," and urged attendees to "support efforts to review and revise laws, regulations and certification requirements which impede work experience and career development."

Education and work is getting added attention from a publication of the National Manpower Institute headed by Willard Wirtz, former Secretary of Labor under both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. The Wirtz book, called *The Boundless Resource—A Prospectus for an Education-Work Policy,* has as its main theme the idea "that there be established, in at least twenty-five cities, Community Education-Work Councils through which school officials, employers, members of labor unions, and members of the public engage collaboratively in developing and administering education-work programs; and that these pilot projects be carefully evaluated, over a five-year period and on a comparative basis, to determine their practicability and effectiveness."

The Wirtz panel, whose work was supported by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Carnegie Corporation, Harvard University, and corporate sponsors of the National Manpower Institute—especially the General Telephone and Electronics Corporation—also calls for: (1) improved occupational and career reporting systems; (2) expanded career guidance and counseling in the high schools; (3) work or service experience for all high school students; (4) the encouragement of one or two year breaks in the formal educational experience during which time youth

would be encouraged to engage in apprenticeship or internship experiences; (5) a review of laws and other constraints against movement into work; and (6) the opening up of public education facilities to use by adults. The Wirtz group also recommends a number of hopeful departures in the adult education area by suggesting that any adult who has not received at least twelve years of formal education be entitled to up to four years of free public education. The report also recommends that after a stipulated period, such as five years, workers be entitled to free tuition for a year's "Deferred Educational Opportunity."

Not to be ignored in the Wirtz scenario are what amount at this point to boiler-plate references to the need to change credentialing mechanisms; the idea of offering academic credit for work experience; the need to change child labor laws so as to allow teenagers to work; and the need to rethink the effects of minimum wage laws on youth unemployment. This report, as in the case of the others discussed earlier, relies heavily on an analysis that high youth unemployment is somehow related to the irrelevance of their education.

Bringing the history of the recent education and work movement up to date requires brief mention of a number of events which indicate that Willard Wirtz is not alone in keeping its banner flying. Representative Carl Perkins, Democrat of Kentucky and Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, has been interested in career education for some time. The new vocational education authorization includes $10 million for federal assistance to the states in planning career education

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programs that emphasize career awareness, career exploration, career planning and assistance in career decision-making. A $215 million authorization for guidance and counseling in the same bill will be used to take educators into business and industry and bring employed persons into the schools. Apparently the planning money—pegged for Fiscal 1978—is intended to pave the way for a larger career education bill Perkins hopes to get enacted in the spring of 1977.

The National Education Association has also managed to get caught up in the movement to link business with education. In the fall of 1975, the NEA held a conference to promote the linkage idea and invited 60 corporations, education groups and government agencies to participate. Apparently the NEA is enthusiastic about the projected role for business in the schools in seeming ignorance of education's stormy experience with performance contracting. Another conference is scheduled for the fall of 1976. Key companies leading the effort are American Cyanimide, General Electric, General Motors, American Telephone and Telegraph, The International Paper Company and Equitable Life Insurance. Not surprisingly, labor has not been involved in this arrangement.

II. The Programs

The growth of a climate of opinion which suggests that schools are not doing their job in preparing students for the work place has come at a time when economic and social conditions outside the schools have taken a devastating turn. Any analysis of the success of schools vis-a-vis work preparation cannot help but take into account that unemployment rates are the highest they have been in this country since the depression: that youth unemployment has risen dramatically and now represents a larger proportion of all unemployment than it ever has; that the problem of truancy is ever-increasing in scope and that school violence and crime have experienced an extremely troublesome upswing. The real questions posed by the intellectual atmosphere supporting current education and work policy is: Are the answers that call for a diminishing of the school role in favor of workplace experiences administered by other institutions really answers that are geared to a correct analysis of the problems? And, ultimately, what is their meaning for education?

Any attempt to answer such a question requires a brief look at what those divisions of HEW now administering career education or education and work programs say they are doing and a description of what some of the programs actually do. For the most part, what has happened is that funds already appropriated under other acts and titles have been used to shore up the career education idea. By Marland's own account $114 million of Office of Education administered funds coming from categories already designated vocational education, adult education, higher education, dropout prevention and education professional development were also pinpointed as career education funds in 1972.

When the National Institute of Education got into the education and work business after its creation in

1972, it started out with a number of career education programs inherited directly from the Office of Education. According to Corrinne Reider, who handles these programs for NIE, as of Fiscal Year 1975 about $40 million of the $45 million invested by the agency in career education had been for OE initiated programs that fall within four basic models. The $5 million that NIE had for discretionary programs was used to evaluate its other career education activities and to develop curricula, films and other materials, and for basic research and policy analysis. In Fiscal Year 1975 NIE put about 13% of its $70 million budget into both inherited and discretionary programs. In Fiscal Year 1976 it spent $14 million for career education. Its '77 allotment will be about half of that.

The $10 million specifically authorized under the Educational Amendments of 1974 for career education was granted by the Office of Education to 81 demonstration projects during Fiscal Year 1975. The Fiscal Year 1975 awards marked the first separate career education budget line item approved by the Congress, although numerous career education activities have been funded by the Office of Education under six different pieces of legislation since 1970. In Fiscal Year 1976 the Office of Education put $8 million into demonstration projects and $2 million into 47 state plans.

OE and NIE are not alone in the career education business. Among the more controversial of the specific programs categorized as career education is the Work Experience and Career Exploration Program (WECEP) administered by the Department of Labor and state education agencies in 13 states. The program had originally allowed that students of 14 and 15 years of age be employed for as much as four hours during the school day and that they be paid a subminimum wage. Studies have indicated that their presence on the work site has had a displacement effect on other workers. While controversy which arose over WECEP has caused the hours of work to be limited to three and has resulted in insistence on minimum wages, the original intent of the program is still common to many of the education and work ideas. Many of WECEP's original provisions were rescinded largely under pressure from the AFL-CIO. It is still possible to employ 14 year-olds under WECEP programs who will receive credits for their work experience, any part of which may be during school hours.

While the broad range of career education, guidance and general awareness programs are worthy of strong support, a number of those that substantially change the curriculum are controversial enough to require some criticism. Writing in the November 1973 issue of *School Review*, Robert J. Nash, a career education critic, cites a number of programs as being overly concerned with instilling a "market mentality" in the early grades: he describes one of them as follows:

> . . . the Ajo public schools in Arizona have instituted the 'Allen Dollar' system in order to teach students 'individual initiative,' the 'value of achievement,' and the economic conditions 'a youngster will be exposed to in the work world.' On the first day of school, students are each given twenty-five Allen Doliars (gift-redeeming tokens) and told that school is a 'job' which they have been hired to do for the year. During the term, youngsters earn more money by satisfying such career-oriented criteria as neatness of work, punctuality, and improvement of economic awareness. The originator of the system, John Allen, believes that in spite of the occasional stealing, the Allen Dollar system is 'exciting and fun' and teaches the class to maintain a 'balanced economy.'

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That such programs reflect a narrow redirection of curricula hardly needs mentioning. They are also markedly unbalanced. A career education program that gives substantial attention to the role of unions or criticizes big business is yet to be found. But more important is the meaning of such programs when they encourage specialized thinking at such early ages. There is a certain mean cynicism in the truth of John Session's quipped observation that "kids used to go to the zoo to learn about the monkeys, now they go to find out what the zookeeper does."

Career education in Georgia, for example, gets down to business pretty quickly. By the junior high school level students are encouraged to progress toward tentative choice of an occupational area and are placed in business, agricultural and industrial settings to observe work. Before long they are performing simple tasks in a simulated work environment and finally they go through direct "hands on" experience at a specific job. At the high school level, students prepare for job entry and either enroll in cooperative programs or prepare for further vocational training.

Oregon is the leader in linking career education to competency based education. The competency approach also leads toward early specialization. By 1978, Oregon high school graduates will be required to have completed 130 hours or about one school year of career education courses. Another requirement is that students develop what are called "survival-level competencies" in

career education. Elementary and secondary students can also work on competencies and by 1977 all elementary schools will be required to offer career awareness courses.

The experience of career education in Oregon and Georgia is evidence of how the Marland approach to the Chief State School Officers paid off. An article in a recent issue of the *Harvard Educational Review* called "Rally 'Round the Workplace: Continuities and Fallacies in Career Education," by W. Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson points out that "Almost every state department of education has appointed career education coordinators; many states have passed or are considering career education mandates in their education legislation, and have developed comprehensive career education development models. In 1974, 30 percent of the country's 17,000 school districts had formally brought career education into their schools." The number is undoubtedly even greater now. With a minimum stimulus of federal money career education has thoroughly penetrated every level of education. Where the federal government has fallen short apparently states and localities have picked up the slack.

The programs cited here have features educators will want to watch out for. There are also numerous programs which afford necessary guidance and awareness counseling and are clearly a plus for the students who can take advantage of them. Since there is much that is right about career education when it represents either an addition to the curriculum or expansion of counseling resources it becomes all the more important to raise questions about programs of dubious value that may be

offered as a subsititute for basic and important curricula already in existence. Pointing to areas or programs worthy of criticism should not be interpreted as an indictment of career education but simply an effort to encourage correction of basic problems.

III. The Thinking

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the concept is the assumptions it makes about what the problems of youth are and the curious mismatch of solutions to problems it then comes up with. Running through all of the reports and career education programs is the idea that high unemployment among youth is somehow related to inadequate educational preparation—that schools are not providing each student with a "salable" skill after high school. Sidney Marland says, for example, that, "while career education was not conceived, as some have suggested, as a hasty political response to unemployment, it should have a significant long-term effect on reducing unemployment." Willard Wirtz asserts that, "the reason a lot of those 4 million 16 to 19 year-olds will be delayed too long moving from education to employment is that they will have ended their education without ever even being exposed to what work—employment—means." In *The Boundless Resource,* Wirtz expresses shock at the fact that the youth unemployment rate is now 20% and approaches 40% for black youths. The ever-growing proportion which youth occupy of the total unemployment statistics, as well as the high percentage of unemployment within the youth category itself, are fundamental points made by those who argue that education is somehow failing in job preparation.

The youth unemployment arguments fail to shore up career education for a number of very good reasons. Martin Mayer makes the best point in an article called "Growing up Crowded" in the September 1975 issue of *Commentary*. He says that because of the postwar baby boom there are, quite simply, many more youth. And, since youth have problems, any social problem that involves them is going to reflect a dramatic increase. Assuming Mayer is at least partly right, is worth pausing to reflect upon the possibility that rises in youth unemployment, youth alienation and youth crime and youth drop-outs may be in large measure a result of the fact that we have more youth even though this doesn't make the problem any less serious.

There are other reasons why youth unemployment does not provide an adequate mainstay for career education—and certainly not when career education means less schooling rather than more. Herbert Bienstock, who heads the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, has said that the demand for college graduates is expected to grow at three times the rate of demand for all workers in the American Labor Force, based on long-term government projections. His view is confirmed by Anne McDougal Young in the August 1975 *Monthly Labor Reports*. She points out that, "Although public attention has been directed toward the difficulties experienced by recent college graduates in finding jobs with career potential, they had not felt the impact of the declining economy as much as persons with lesser educational attainment. Their unemployment rate was about the same as a year earlier. Differential employment rates between whites and blacks have also been explained by level of educational attainment in *Monthly Labor Reports*.

What this would seem to mean is that employment prospects are bad now for college graduates because they are bad for everyone. But, since college graduates are still preferred over others, if employment picks up they will be the first hired. This also means that in periods of high unemployment the people with college degrees still stand a better chance of getting jobs than those without. This would seem to make the Marland idea that every student should graduate from high school with a "salable skill" impossible since even those who may have some training will have to line up for jobs behind those with college degrees. Skills won't sell unless there is a market for them. So, while career educators blithely talk about reducing the minimum school-leaving age for reasons of job-relevance the college degree continues to be the best job ticket available. Jack Sessions' conjecture that in some respects career education programs seems to be working hand-in-glove with efforts to decrease college enrollment by raising tuition would seem to be right on target.

Martin Mayer throws an interesting twist into these observations. He says that college enrollment is highest in periods of high unemployment and that it goes down when the labor market expands and employers need worker so much that they become less choosy about their credentials. If this is true, then the 1970's career educator's advice that youth unhappy with school concentrate on finding alternatives and work expe-

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rience is exactly the opposite of what it should be. Such youth will only be adding to the flood of unemployed already in the labor force and their chances of employment without any credentials will be very slim. One wonders why a proposal that might make some sense in a period of high employment is being pressed when there are no jobs to be found.

The career education reasoning becomes even more suspect when one takes a look at the composition of the labor force and the direction it is moving in. Between 1960 and 1970 those job categories showing the greatest increase are white collar jobs. White collar jobs grew 34 percent, which was nearly double the rate for total employment. Within this category, professional, technical and kindred workers was the fastest growing subgroup as it was in the 1950's. Blue collar jobs rose by only 9% while service workers retained their same relative share of the total work force. White collar employees rose to occupy 45.6% of the total work force in 1970 while the blue collar share fell from 36.5% to 33.4%. Among those jobs experiencing the most rapid gains—with growth rates of 10 times or more—were computer specialists, bank officer and financial manager, sales manager except retail trade, computer and peripheral equipment operator, teacher aide, cement and concrete finisher, earth driller, school monitor, and welfare service aide.

While not all of these jobs require a college education, most of them require educational skills that a community college or college degree would give the competitive edge to, particularly in a period of high unemployment. The point is that while education cannot determine the

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labor market changes and therefore cannot erase unemployment, the nature of the labor market is generally moving in a direction that requires more rather than less education. And, where highly specific skills that require training rather than a broad general education are the basis for employment, the possibility that such jobs may be wiped out with some new technological change means that candidates for employment must have an educational base that enables them to be retrained relatively easily. Arguments like these raise another whole set of questions surrounding issues like: the meaning of general education as a preventative to structural unemployment; the job value of credentials; the effects of education on both the size of the labor force and the degree of competition within it, especially in a period of high unemployment; the quality of jobs available to those who have only a high school degree; and the value of a general education to retrainability.

These are complicated issues which have a direct bearing on the merits of a concept like career education. Unfortunately, many of them have been practically ignored by career educators. While this group spends a lot of time, for example, attacking academic credentials as being irrelevant to job performance, few career educators address themselves to the need for intellectual and performance adaptability among job specialists whose jobs may be wiped out by simple technological changes. Even fewer understand that such adaptability just might be related to the thinking skills learned through academic training and not to the performance techniques derived from career training. In an extremely useful article called, "Education for Work: A Full Employment Strategy," Eleanor Gilpatrick, writing in the March 1975 issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* makes one of the few intelligent analyses available on the relationship between education and employment. Viewing education as a preventative to unemployment, assuming the job market is good and assuming that everyone has a sufficient amount of general education to be capable of retraining, she notes:

> ". . . it is evident that liberal arts programs, just as surely as engineering programs, have in the past trained individuals in the skills and knowledges which are viewed by employers as relevant for job performance. In the case of the liberal arts, it happens that a vast array of white collar work has required generalized intellectual skills which have been developed in conjunction with the presentation of less relevant specific course content.

She also says that where the liberal arts has fallen short in this regard it is because of recent pressures to transform education into a production line mold:

> The demise of small class size, of class discussion, and of the clash of ideas at the undergraduate level may well be one reason that graduates of liberal arts programs appear to be less prepared to offer the generalized intellectual skills needed for upper and middle level work. Skills require practice in order to be learned, and lecture sections, multiple choice exams, and non-controversial classroom experiences to not provide practice in intellectual skills.

If Gilpatrick is right, then the career educators must be very careful. Their thrust toward specialized job training may be depriving young people of general capabilities they will need to readjust to a number of jobs over lifetimes that will experience ever-

increasing rates of economic change.

Many critics of career education as we know it would carry the need for a basic education one step further. A number of labor intellectuals including Gus Tyler, Walter Davis, and John Sessions have pointed out that the labor movement values education not only as an *entré* to jobs, but because it has always stood for the idea that universal education produces an informed citizenry that must be intellectually equipped to run a democratic society. Education is thus a guard against worker and citizen exploitation and must be had by everyone. It also enables people to choose among a greater range of alternatives in leisure time activities and to enrich their experiences generally.

Suggesting that a strong basic education is essential for every worker is not very convincing to career educators committed to the idea that credentials are simply a barrier to employment and have nothing to do with job performance. The battle cry now is "job-relevancy." The American Federation of Teachers has had considerable experience with the unwillingness of anti-credentialists to accept the simple common sense argument that a teacher who knows something just might be better than one who doesn't. Since a college degree is now a job ticket—for teachers as well as for many others—their idea is to somehow claim that the ticket, particularly since it is an expensive ticket, is really irrelevant. These claims are now being made in the case of teaching regardless of the fact that there is no proof whatever to substantiate the argument. If we look at the situation a little more closely the real intent becomes clear. If the expensive job ticket can be discredited then no one will have to pay for it and, in addition, the higher salary that it may now bring can be lowered. Career educators must answer the charge that their movement could be a vehicle for lowering salaries and dismantling education.

Throwing all those non-credentialed people into the labor force has other economic implications. For one thing, it increases the number of people looking for jobs which means that it increases competition. Naturally, this also means that it increases the pressure for people to work at lower wages and diminishes the power of their unions to protect them. Career educators must be wary that they are not responsible for a policy thrust that could undermine the credibility of education, increase competition in the labor force, create pressures to lower wages and hire cheaper employees, and mislead youth into thinking that less education is better than more. The irony is that before the recession when more education was still valued as an undertaking worth pursuing, more youth were employed than ever before. Putting this together with the pressures to weaken child labor laws, lower the minimum school leaving age and pay students with subminimum wages, the general claim that career education will help the youth unemployment picture seems to be on very shaky ground.

It becomes increasingly obvious that all of the above outcomes of career education seem to have more advantages for business than anyone else. Aside from the indirect effects cited above, a number of promotors of the education and work theme are suggesting that business pick up part of the responsibility for school by

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serving on education and work councils and by getting involved in student work projects. Any serious analysis of the Nixon-Ford education and work policy must recognize it as an effort to promote privatization of education and reduce some of its intent to purposes of the profit motive. Moving in such a direction also poses a direct threat to the authority of local school boards who legitimately control a democratically administered public school system.

There are numerous other reasons why educators must be circumspect about much of what now fits the name career education. Paralleling career education's attack on education is its assumption that there is something inherently preferable about the work place as an experience for youth. Coleman II presumes, for example, that the exposure youth will get to adults through work-place experiences will somehow expand their horizons and erase the generation gap that now exists between age groupings. But, the potential quality of these subsitute experiences is not examined very carefully. There are questions to be asked about which adults youth are likely to be exposed to via low level youth-type jobs. There are also questions to be asked about the impact of the work environment on young people—is it likely to enhance or stifle their imagination for career choices?

While the intent of career educators in this regard seems to be lofty and expansive, their continuous repetition of the relevance theme must be tied to another notion they seem to like—the idea that too many people are "overeducated." A policy paper of the Office of Education called "An Introduction to Career

Education" makes this point clearly:

> American education has not kept pace with the rapidity of change in the post-industrial occupational society. As a result, when worker qualifications are compared with job requirements, we find overeducated and undereducated workers are present in large numbers. Both the boredom of the overeducated worker and the frustration of the undereducated worker have contributed to growing worker alienation in the total occupational society.

It has to be understood immediately that what this is really talking about is the dire effects of too much education. Presumably if education is kept to a minimum no one will expect too much from his or her work—either in the form of fulfillment or money. Given this career educators are hard-put to answer the charges some have made that career education promotes social tracking and will inevitably end up maintaining class and racial educational differences are true.

Much of the romance career educators have with the work environment over the school environment comes from the Coleman II idea that somehow educational institutions prolong the dependency of youth and delay youth's assumption of responsibility. Voucher proposals are a variation on this theme since they suggest that the burden of educational decision-making be shifted totally to youth by throwing educational support into the market place of youth choice. Such solutions, either in the form of student work programs or vouchers, can be questioned on a number of grounds. And, since the "youth-is-too-dependent-and-it-is-education's fault" theme is little more than conjecture at this point, such questions certainly must be raised.

The most obvious reason to won-

der whether youth jobs will really result in an increased sense of responsibility is to look at the quality of the jobs themselves. A glance, through "Bridging the Gap: A Study of Education-to-Work Linkages" a publication of the College Entrance Examination Board (now headed by Sidney Marland) shows that most emphasis in student jobs is placed on low level industrial jobs. Given the employment picture and the inevitable unwillingness of industry to give high school students either responsible jobs, or adult level pay, it is hard to believe that such youth jobs are really raising the level of student responsibility or doing anything to substantially change their very real position of dependency. Most low level industrial jobs do not require much responsibility, nor is the worker's position anything other than one of dependency on the employer. The worker depends on the employer for a living. If anything, his work dependency relationship is probably even more debilitating than the ones students might suffer. This is one reason why the labor movement has been trying to increase the power and dignity of workers for the last 100 years.

The voucher idea gives students their choice on what route to career development they want to take. It turns over any institutional responsibility for advising students about job possibilities based on occupational projections to the students themselves. It presumes that high school graduates are already in a position to decide, and that it is simply up to educational and training institutions to swing gently in the breeze—whichever way it is blowing. The essential message is that institutions are wrong and the students will be right. It is true that institutions have been wrong—teacher education schools, for example, totally failed to predict the tremendous decline in the birth rate that followed the post-war baby boom and kept right on merrily training teachers for jobs that would not exist—but are we to then assume that students fresh out of high school are in a better position to survey the job scene and come up with the correct choice about their long-term career futures? Obviously it makes much more sense to redirect institutional supports to assist in the process of career development and career choice than it does to simply throw the responsibility to naive and inexperienced youth.

IV. The Potential

If the analysis behind career education is weak and if many of the programs seem to be more in the interests of big business than they are in the interests of our nation's youth, what is there in the idea that represents a positive direction? Even if career education cannot solve the youth unemployment problem certainly there are youth problems that well-directed career education programs could help with.

Career awareness programs that fully explain the nature of a variety of work settings cannot help but be valuable. Extensive counseling services that not only tell youth what jobs are like, but provide them with realistic projections on the future stability of those jobs, their pay scales, their hazards, their geographical distribution, the nature of their unionization, what education they require, and other crucial information would be invaluable. Rather than simply throwing job choices out to young people, such choices must be thoroughly supplemented with a wealth of vocational information. Counseling services have never been adequate in our schools. Unfortunately they are often the first to be abandoned in a budget squeeze. If there is anything that needs full support from career education advocates it is expanded counseling.

At its 1976 convention the American Federation of Teachers passed a comprehensive resolution on education and work which was both critical of some approaches and raised real hopes for what positive programs could be. The resolution urged AFT state federations and locals to become involved in program development and put forward the following as positive approaches:

☐ Expanded guidance and counseling services must be provided to all students. Career education programs which offer additional guidance—which expand upon the basic curriculum and which are aimed at career awareness—should be supported. Teachers may wish to use job resource persons in these programs, but such persons should be chosen by the teacher, and be under his or her supervision. Non-professionals should not be used in professional roles. Such programs should include accurate treatment of the role of labor unions and should deal with unions as well as employers in making job placements. In fact, such placement, services should be expanded.

☐ Alternative programs which have a career orientation may be provided for students who cannot function in, or who do not obtain benefit from, regular school programs. While some of these may involve work experience they must be carefully constructed so that they are clearly the responsibility of the public school system and aimed at broadening rather than narrowing youth's educational experience.

"... the misleading assumption that less education is better than more when it comes to jobs, could be turned around to support expanded adult education in the cradle-to-grave framework of lifelong or recurrent education."

Convention delegates were cautious in their support for career education, and issued a number of strong warnings:

☐ Where career education programs involve any kind of experience at the job site they should be tried only in industries where there is full employment and where no adult workers will be displaced. These programs must supplement a basic education and not act as a substitute for it.

☐ The AFT will resist the creation of programs which involve watering down child labor laws, providing for subminium wages, lowering the school-leaving age, or weakening health and safety laws related to work.

☐ The AFT strongly opposes career education programs that involve turning over some of the responsibility for public education to the private sector. Cooperative "education and work" community councils should in no way undermine the authority of publicly elected or appointed school boards. We oppose voucher plans that would subject both education and its consumers to the whims and prejudices of the marketplace.

For all that is mis-directed in career education, as it is now being implemented, there is much to education and work as a policy theme that escapes the analytical pitfalls in which career educators seem to be trapped. In fact, the misleading assumption that less education is better than more when it comes to jobs, could be turned around to support expanded adult education in the cradle-to-grave framework of lifelong or recurrent education. All of the warnings just made to career educators against diminishing general, liberal education, and thus hurting the job prospects of youth in a changing economy, could also be issued as exhortations in favor of expanding a variety of forms of adult education.

One good project that has recently emerged within this framework is a contract between the National Manpower Institute and the National Institute of Education to study educational benefits programs negotiated by unions. NMI head, Willard Wirtz's excellent idea of a year's "deferred educational opportunity," and his proposal that adults without a high school education be provided with as many as four free years of additional education are other proposals that recognize the real value of education to jobs and to life in general.

"All of the warnings just made to career educators against diminishing general, liberal education . . . could also be issued as exhortations in favor of expanding a variety of forms of adult education."

Even some of those who work for the Office of Education seem to have this view. Raymond E. Wanner of the Office of Education's Institute of International Studies has looked at what goes on in a number of European countries in making recommendations for new programs in this country. He has pointed to paid educational leave, workers sabbaticals, government supported education, and open educational access at universities for all workers over 25 as positive programs. Unfortunately none of these ideas have ever gotten off the ground in this country—probably because they give legitimacy to the notion that educational institutions have a major and somewhat expensive social role to play. The American Federation of Teachers believes that these are the most hopeful education and work programs. It is too bad they have never been tried. The AFT convention resolution urged those already involved in career education as well as many others who may recognize the importance of expanded adult opportunities to support the following proposals:

☐ Job training programs which build upon a basic education by combining further academic experiences with on-the-job experiences should be expanded. These might include internship programs for teachers, career ladder programs for paraprofessionals and others as well as apprenticeship programs.

☐ More information should be made available on job availability, occupational projections, job access, etc. Information which is available should be compiled and disseminated in some useful form.

☐ Adult education programs must be expanded. Such programs should service all adult educational needs whether they be for job training or retraining or for personal enrichment. They may take the form of worker sabbaticals, paid educational leave, deferred educational opportunity and the like. Programs that provide workers with recognized credentials should be available to them. Programs now offered by institutions of higher education that provide for career training should not be cut simply because they are expensive.

☐ Restrictions against the use of public schools by adults must be re-examined. Special programs which allow adults to return to school to complete a high school program should be implemented.

Hopefully the debate on how education and work should be related will continue. Certainly our policymakers have not yet come up with programs that adequately meet the needs of youth for a solid basic education. Nor have they provided young people with a realistic assessment of how education and training relate to their career futures. They have not even tried to deal with these problems when it comes to adults. In watching the discussion procede, hopefully it will be remembered that without educational opportunity—even given its shortcomings—none of us would be equipped to discuss the issue seriously. There are probably not very many writers of reports or federal bureaucrats or educators who would choose the assembly line over the jobs they have now.

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